



A MESSAGE FROM THE NAVY SURGEON GENERAL: PROFESSIONAL BEHAVIOR

The following message was sent by Navy Surgeon General Vice Adm. Forrest Faison to Navy Medicine commanders world-wide.

Shipmates:

It has come to my attention that members of the Navy Medicine team posted highly offensive photos and videos on their personal social media pages involving newborns at our naval hospitals. This content was then shared on various platforms and has been viewed by hundreds of thousands of individuals. Members

of the Navy Medicine team represent the Navy 24/7. Unprofessional and inappropriate social media behavior is inconsistent with both our core values of honor, courage and commitment as well as our medical ethics, violating the oaths we took for our profession and office. This type of behavior also has a negative effect on mission accomplishment and good order and discipline.

In an age where information can be shared instantly, what we say and post online must reflect the highest standards of character and conduct, in both our personal and professional lives. As health care professionals, we are entrusted with the lives and well-being of all those who have volunteered to defend our freedom, including their families. We owe them the best care and compassion our nation can offer. We also owe them our unqualified respect. Any behavior that falls short of this expectation will be dealt with appropriately. This type of inappropriate conduct violates two of my core values: (1) be worthy of the trust placed in our hands in the privilege of caring for America's sons and daughters, and (2) be worthy of the "uniform" we wear, both military and civilian, and all that we represent. At every level of the enterprise, we must send a clear message that Navy and Navy Medicine leadership take every allegation of offensive and unacceptable online conduct seriously and will hold responsible individuals accountable for their actions.

I have directed immediate mandatory all-hands stand downs within 48 hours at all Navy Medicine commands to review our oaths, our pledges, our reasons for serving, as well as Navy Medicine's policy regarding use of personally owned phones and other recording devices (BUMED INST 3104.2A). Further, all commanding officers will be tasked to ensure no additional patient photos exist on social media and to take immediate action to remove such content. We are committed to working closely with ongoing investigations to ensure we have the facts and take appropriate action. I have also implemented an immediate prohibition of all personal cell phones in patient care areas until further notice. Additionally, I have directed all commanding officers to personally contact current mothers and expectant mothers planning to deliver in one of our facilities to reassure them, inform them of our actions, and address any of their concerns.

I applaud the individuals who took a stand when they witnessed this inappropriate behavior online. They chose not to be silent. This is what I expect of every member of the Navy Medicine team – from the deck plate to our senior leaders. Honor, service, caring and compassion – that is what the Navy Medicine team represents. Because of that, American families rest well at night knowing we have the watch and are committed to the best care for their loved ones. We cannot compromise the trust that has been placed in our hands. Our Sailors, Marines and their families deserve our best.



Official U.S. Navy photo

SG sends